

Connor Warden

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Professional Summary

Dynamic, visionary, and ROI-driven Creative Director with over 17 years of experience leading cross-functional teams, optimizing production workflows, and scaling multi-channel brand campaigns. Proven track record of directing creative output from early concept stages through to high-impact production. Expert at balancing an entrepreneurial spirit with structured, data-driven decision-making to deliver sophisticated creative solutions. Strong mentor dedicated to developing internal talent, managing external vendors, and leveraging emerging design trends to keep brand campaigns fresh, innovative, and aligned with organizational growth.

Core Competencies

- Solution-Oriented Leader
- Client Relationship Management
- Creative Data-Driven Problem Solving
- Process Improvement
- Visual Storytelling
- Strategic Planning
- Budget Management
- Cross-Functional Collaboration
- Workflow Optimization

Technical Skills

Creative Platforms: Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Premiere Pro, After Effects), UI/UX (Adobe XD, Sketch), Google Web Designer, Intuiface

Web & Interactive Development: HTML5, CSS3, SCSS/SASS, JavaScript (ES6+), PHP, SQL, React.js, GSAP, Bootstrap, Tailwind CSS

Systems & Workflows: WordPress (Custom Theme/Plugin Architecture), Shopify, REST APIs, Git, GitHub, VS Code, Agile Methodologies

AI & Emerging Technology: Gemini, Adobe Firefly, Veo 3, GitHub Copilot

Professional Experience

Sparkfire Branding | Ashburn, VA

Interactive Developer & Creative Lead | January 2021 – May 2026

- **Creative & Technical Leadership:** Architected high-performance web solutions and immersive digital experiences for a diverse, high-value client portfolio, directing creative looks from early concept to final production delivery.
- **Campaign Performance & ROI:** Conceptualized and produced high-conversion Google Banner Ad campaigns utilizing advanced HTML5 animation, analyzing data-driven insights to significantly increase client click-through rates (CTR).
- **Innovation & Trends:** Served as the internal consultant on emerging creative technologies; successfully integrated Generative AI tools (including Adobe Firefly and Gemini) into the workflow, cutting asset production timelines while keeping campaign aesthetics cutting-edge.
- **Multimedia Production:** Directed end-to-end video production pipelines—from storyboarding to post-production editing—delivering compelling visual stories that enhanced target audience engagement.

Key Accomplishments:

- Spearheaded the development and launch of a new mobile application, successfully migrating **13,500+ users** with zero downtime.

- **Reduced content update times by 89%** for client touchscreen kiosks by architecting a dynamic integration using the WordPress REST API.
- Generated **888K+ YouTube views** by conceptualizing, producing, and managing the end-to-end creation of a high-impact video project.
- Boosted average email click-through rate (CTR) from **1.7% to 3.1%** for an audience of **130K+ subscribers** by executing data-driven A/B testing and targeted content strategies.
- Engineered an **82% reduction in web server storage consumption** (from 252GB to 45GB) by optimizing web server infrastructure and backup pipelines.

True Value | Chicago, IL

Digital Designer & Multimedia Lead | May 2019 – March 2020

- **Project Workflow Ownership:** Spearheaded end-to-end digital project lifecycles, establishing efficient project workflows from initiation to delivery to ensure high-impact digital and motion graphics campaigns stayed on schedule and within scope.
- **Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** Partnered closely with internal marketing, corporate communication, and technical stakeholders to ensure unified brand consistency across fragmented digital environments.
- **Audience Engagement:** Designed and executed multi-channel content strategies, leveraging data analytics to achieve measurable lifts in target audience engagement through interactive assets and rich video media.

Key Accomplishments:

- **Slashed monthly video production time by 73%** (from 15 hours to 4 hours) by architecting dynamic, templated workflows using nested sequences in Adobe Premiere Pro.
- Executed a high-volume content strategy, producing **27 multi-channel email campaigns** and **44 video assets** within an accelerated 10-month timeline.

Smeja Enterprises | McHenry, IL

Creative Director | July 2013 – April 2019

- **Team Management & Development:** Managed, mentored, and developed a 4-person in-house design team alongside an agile network of external freelancers, fostering a collaborative culture of professional growth, accountability, and high-quality output.
- **Cross-Functional Execution:** Led alignment between IT, Creative, and external vendors to launch complex, integrated marketing campaigns on time and under budget.
- **Omnichannel Branding:** Unified brand identity across all physical and digital touchpoints, including consumer product packaging and large-scale experiential environments, strengthening market presence.
- **Strategic Planning:** Collaborated directly with executive leadership to forecast annual design needs, manage creative budgets, and optimize resource allocation based on positive business ROI.

Key Accomplishments:

- Engineered a web-based project submittal generator that **eliminated a 2-3 day operational bottleneck**, enabling the sales team to generate bids instantly.
- Maintained a **95%+ on-time delivery rate** while managing a high-volume portfolio of **50+ concurrent projects**.
- Achieved an exceptional **720% Return on Ad Spend (ROAS)** on Google Display Network by deploying dynamic product ads and hyper-targeted audience segments.

Connor Warden Design | Chicago, IL

Creative Director & Principal | December 2008 – Present

- **Client Portfolio:** Delivered high-impact creative solutions for select clients including Burrell Communications Group, California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Chicago Canine Rescue (CCR), Comcast, Xfinity, and Walmart.
- **Vendor & Operations Management:** Sourced and oversaw external third-party vendors and specialty freelancers, managing strict contract negotiations, production timelines, and rigorous quality control.
- **Business Transformation:** Translated complex client business goals into actionable, comprehensive design strategies and ROI-driven creative concepts.
- **High-Stakes Pitching:** Spearheaded the development of high-impact pitch decks and stakeholder presentations, successfully securing accounts and aligning executive expectations.

Education

Purdue University | West Lafayette, IN

Bachelor of Science in Computer Graphics Technology | May 2008

- Focus: Interactive Multimedia Design
- Minors: Computer Information Technology | Art & Design